The Seed Sower.

A Magazine for the Church, the School, and the Home.

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The First Snow.

There is sorrow and there is mirth,
The soft white snow is draping the earth,
The boy is shouting and making a slide,
But the cottage hearth lacks fuel inside.

He dips his hand in the snow so gay,
And rubs them hard to keep cold away;
While the puffing beadle, that man of law,
Ties up the village pump with straw!

Chill is the time for man and beast,
The wind cuts sharp as a knife from the east;
The little ones from the cold and ice
Under the bedclothes creep like mice.

With comforters drawn to the chin,
The folk go stamping out and in,
And their noses, as they come and go,
Are red as rosebuds among the snow.

Hatless, capless, mad with fun,
Out of school the urchins run,
Quick as thought the balls are made,
And the air is thick with the cannonade.

They pause as the beadle passes by,
And hang their heads and hush their cry,
But just as the great man disappears
A cold ball strikes him behind the ears!

Off goes his hat—his red face turns,
Red as a turkey's-comb it burns,
But the spell is broken: with shouts and cries
The enemy pelts him till he flies!

All things around us, high or low,
Are under the spell of the white, white snow;
Its mystic hand with a silvern gleam
Trances all to a pleasant dream.

The Religious Influence of Oliver Wendell Holmes.

(Spoken at the Old Meeting Church, Birmingham, on Sunday morning, October 14th, 1894).

Among the many otherwise admirable notices of Oliver Wendell Holmes that have appeared in the newspapers scarcely one has touched upon his place and influence in the great movement which, during the last 50 years, has broken up the old Orthodoxy. Holmes was such a many-sided man,—poet, physician, psychologist, professor of anatomy, novelist, essayist, man of the world, that the religious side of his character and work has been by many overlooked. Yet it may be questioned whether he did not get his hold upon his public quite as much by his deliverances on Theology as by his genial wit, gay wisdom, and genuine poetry. Among the last words which Sir Walter Scott spoke to Lockhart, his biographer, were: "Be a good man, my dear!" The man who has just left us, and is remembered with gratitude by a host of admirers both here and in America, was before all things else "a good man." Generous, kindly, cheerful, affectionate, unspoiled by prosperity, eager to acknowledge every contemporary's merit, to the world doubly dear, not for his wit and genius merely, but as an exemplar of simple, unaffected goodness. He was merciless to all bigots, whether medical or clerical; he poured a fine scorn on cant and humbug; he made the world laugh at the terrible old bogies of priestcraft and

Calvinism, yet men felt that beneath there dwelt a soul touched with the spirit of grace and truth.

More than that, he did much to make men think seriously on serious subjects, for his own playful moods were full of a noble and serious purpose. He was one of the band of religious reformers who, 50 years ago, undertook to do battle with the dominant theology of orthodox America. Calvinism had kept a firmer grip on the American churches than it had done here, and long after it had been softened in this country by the Evangelical movement it retained in the States many of its harsher features. The attack in America was largely led by men of letters. Literature has always had a revulsion against Calvinism, for Calvinism represents intellectual sterility. It never had a poet, or an artist, or a literary man of the front rank. The poets all belong to a more Catholic church—the Church of Humanity. You and I are accustomed to be looked down on and treated as ecclesiastical pariahs by the sects and denominations, but we have this immense satisfaction, that ours is the religion of Shakespeare, of Milton, of Wordsworth, of Burns, of the Brownings, of Tennyson, of Whittier, Emerson, Lowell, Longfellow, and Holmes—in a word, the religion of all the poets. I say that not to minister to conceit, but to inspire hope and confidence.

Oliver Wendell Holmes was brought up in the orthodox fold, tempered indeed by the influences of a gracious home. But all his life-long he had a lively remembrance of the sermons he heard in childhood. It was not long before he thought his way out into a broader faith, for, as he said, "nobody can keep questions from springing up in every young mind of any force or honesty." "As for the excellent little wretches," he adds, "who grow up in what they are taught with never a scruple or a query, Protestant or Catholic, Jew or Mormon, Mahometan or Buddhist, they signify nothing in the intellectual life of the race. If the world had been wholly peopled with such half-vitalised mental negatives, there never would have been a creed like that of Christendom."

There is this to be said, the new thought was in the atmosphere which Holmes breathed at College; the men who became his life-long friends were full of it. That great group of men, Emerson, Channing, Whittier, Longfellow, Lowell, Hawthorne, Byant, Freeman Clarke, whose genius shed a lustre on New England for half-a-century, and who seem to have left no successors, were all either pronounced Unitarians, or Unitarian in all their sympathies and convictions. They all grew up at the same time, and imbibed those influences which swept over Boston, Cambridge, and a whole country side, whereby the Calvinism of many congregational churches was transformed into a Christian theism. Of course these men had to pay the penalty for daring to think differently from the orthodox creed. Holmes tells us how he was libelled in the public Press as "a moral parricide," because he ventured to depart from the doctrines held by his parents.

Although no theological expert, Holmes had given theology a great deal of study, and knew, what every scholar and man of letters knows, that the orthodox creed rests on a crumbling foundation. His point of attack, however, was those doctrines which do not need any special theological lore to understand, but which the human conscience, a man's heart, the ineradicable instincts of justice and pity, declare to be not simply intellectually wrong but downright immoral. Original sin, hereditary guilt, total depravity, everlasting punishment, substitutionary atonement, that God should doom men to eternal loss for a theological error,—these and their like were the foes to whom he gave no quarter. Certainly in America he contributed as much as anyone to the disintegration of Calvinistic dogmas. He turned on them the light of his inimitable common sense, and pierced them through and through with the shafts of his incisive wit.

This was how he made men laugh at bigotry and intolerance. "Do you know," he asks in the "Professor at the Breakfast Table,"—"that every man has a religious belief peculiar to himself? Smith is always a Smithite! He takes in exactly Smith's-worth of knowledge, Smith's-worth of truth, of beauty, of divinity. And Brown has been from time immemorial trying to burn him, to excommunicate him, to anonymous-article him, because he did not take in Brown's-worth of knowledge, truth, beauty, divinity. Iron is essentially the same everywhere and always, but the sulphate of iron is never the

same as the carbonate of iron. Truth is invariable, but the Smithate of truth must always differ from the Brownate of truth."

Never was there a man in whom the elements were more graciously mixed than Holmes; never one more overflowing with the milk of human kindness. It seemed impossible that hate should enter into so genial a nature. Yet he had one hatred deep and unquenchable,—the hatred of bigotry, especially bigotry which condemns men for swerving to the right or to the left, if only by a hair's-breadth, from its own opinions, which sets up its own conclusions as the standard by which to try all men's Christianity. Against this eternal popery of the human heart Holmes waged unceasing war. How absurd and contemptible he made the bigotry of modern times appear, which attempts to put a stigma on persons by the use of opprobrious names, or names intended to be opprobrious, when the ancient sting which went with these names is no longer possible. Think of the ridicule he heaped on those who still go about flinging the old wicked names at men—Heretic, Schismatic, Infidel, Blasphemer—without the power to inflict the actual torments and punishments that once belonged to them. "As long as you can catch a man and drop him into an *oubliette*, or pull him out a few inches longer by machinery, or put a hot iron through his tongue, or make him climb up a ladder and sit on a board at the top of a stake so that he should be slowly broiled by the fire kindled around it, there was some sense in these words, they led to something. But since we have done with these tools we had better give up these words. I should like to see a Yankee advertisement like this:—"Patent thumb-screws for sale; will crush the bone in three turns. The cast-iron boot, with wedges and mallet, only five dollars. The celebrated extension rack, warranted to stretch a man six inches in 20 minutes; money returned if it proves unsatisfactory."

Bigotry found it had to survive ridicule like that! Nothing angers the bigot like laughing at him.

If there was one abominable doctrine of the old orthodoxy which, more than another, Holmes helped to explode, it was that of Total Depravity and Heritable Guilt. He was brought up in a district which still resounded with the fame of Jonathan Edwards, a preacher who said in his sermons that there were infants a span long in hell, and that God regarded every little child in the nursery or schoolroom who had not undergone conversion as "a little viper!" Here is one sentence of Holmes in reply:—"The doctrine of heritable guilt, with its mechanical consequences, has done for our moral nature what the doctrine of demoniac possessions has done in barbarous times, and still does among barbarous tribes for disease. Out of the black cloud came the lightning which struck the compass of humanity." On the other hand he hailed "Darwinism" because it removed the traditional curse from the infant lying in its mother's arms; because it lifted from the shoulders of man the responsibility for the fact of death; because woman can no longer be taunted with having brought down on herself the pangs which make her sex a martyrdom. And in "Over the Teacups" he writes, "The doctrine of evolution, so far as it is accepted, changes the whole relation of man to Creative power. It substitutes infinite hope in place of infinite despair for the vast majority of mankind. Instead of a shipwreck from which a few cabin passengers and others are to be saved in the long-boat, it gives mankind a vessel built to endure the tempests, and at last to reach a port where passengers may hope for a home better than any they had in the old country."

Holmes, in fact, together with Whittier, Longfellow, Emerson, and Lowell, did for American theology what Wordsworth, Shelley, Tennyson, and the Brownings have done for English theology—*they humanised it.* These men were all up in arms against the narrow evangelicalism, which was only a modified Calvinism, of their day, because it violated mercy, pity, justice, and love. They threw men back upon the primary human affections as the surest guide in the search for religious truth, and declared that simple human love is the only test either of piety or theology. Even we Liberal Christians do not adequately appreciate the work done by the poets during the last hundred years in broadening men's conceptions of the deepest things. Their words have reached multitudes who were beyond the voice of our prophets, and have wrought a mighty change in hearts our churches could not touch. Among those who

have done this work conspicuously we place Oliver Wendell Holmes. I venture to say his influence was more operative than that of Channing and Parker combined.

Yet, perhaps, Oliver Wendell Holmes did more for religion by his own persuasive, cheerful, unaffected piety, a piety which is present in all he wrote like a delicate aroma. People were shocked at the boldness with which he attacked cherished dogmas, and still more at the wit with which he made the world laugh at the once terrible realities, but now only the worn-out phantoms of superstition. Yet there has rarely lived a soul more tender, devout, and reverent than his. Steeped in science and letters, two influences which are often supposed to draw men away from religion, the great things of faith never lost their hold upon him. He loved the simple worship of the Church to which he belonged. He humorously called it the Church of the Galileans, the Church outside the pale of all orthodoxies, whether Judaic or Christian. He admitted it was not altogether an easy Church to belong to, since it demanded that a man should think for himself, and should go on toiling to the end of the chapter. In an interview with an English admirer he said:—"Of course it's less trouble to be an Episcopalian; you go to church once a week to get tuned up to a proper pitch, you twang your string to see if you match the standard, and it's all done till the next week; but we poor Unitarians have to rub our eyes and think every morning when we wake, 'Let's see, what do we believe this morning?'" Which was just his humorous way of saying that Truth has never finished her revelations, and that thoughtful men have never done learning her lessons.

Or what shall I say of that serene, kindly, beautiful old age, attended by "honour, love, obedience, troops of friends," the humour clinging to the delightful spirit to the last, as when on his last birthday he declared himself to be 85 years *young*; the innate charity of his humane soul deepening and widening as he drew near to the eternal shore. Think of him at 80 years of age writing with his loving smile, a smile that always had a twinkle in it,—"I cannot help hoping that the ablest of the Archangels will be retained for the defence of the worst sinners!' Think of the beautiful hymns with which he enriched the Psalmody of the Church. I know scarcely anything lovelier in modern hymnology than the magnificent outburst, "Lord of all being, throned afar." We thank God that He gave the world so bright an example, so star-like a spirit, one who has helped thousands to tread life's common way in cheerful godliness, who cheered on all that was fair, good, and kind in human life. We thank God that He gave our Churches this exquisite instance of reverence and rationalism, of piety and freedom. We remember also while we call him *ours*, that he belonged in all his sympathies to that household of faith which is larger than any intellectual limits. Listen to one of the last songs of his old age, in which he sang the creed of that illimitable church, the church of humanity:—

When in my simple Gospel creed
That "God is Love" so plain I read,
Shall dreams of heathen birth affright
My pathway in the coming night?
Ah! Lord of Light, though spectres pale
Fill with their threats the shadowy vale,
With Thee my faltering steps to aid,
How can I dare to be afraid?

O mortal, wavering in thy trust,
Lift thy pale forehead from the dust!
The mists that cloud thy darkened eyes
Fade e'er they reach the o'erarching skies!
When the blind heralds of despair
Would bid thee doubt a Father's care,
Look up from earth, and read above
On heaven's blue tablet, GOD IS LOVE!

JOSEPH WOOD.

Men who would scruple to tell a lie do not scruple to entertain a prejudice: forgetting that prejudice is a standing lie.

Sacred, no doubt is individuality, but Christian individuality preserves itself only by consecrating itself to the development of Christian individuality in another.

Many men want a wider sphere. But when we come to look the facts in the face, all spheres are equally wide. Everywhere infinity is around, and eternity is behind and before.

The Church and the Layman.

AN ADDRESS BY THE REV. MINOT J. SAVAGE BEFORE THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION, MAY 29TH, 1894.

I have been requested to speak about the church and the relation to the church of the Unitarian layman. I shall begin by asking the question, "What is a church?"

Is it the meeting-house? Is it the ritual? Is it the creed? Is it the method of organisation? Is it any of the paraphernalia of appurtenances of the church? Or is it even the minister? Is it not rather the people, many or few, that have banded together to accomplish the one purpose for which the church comes into existence? Jesus said that where two or three were gathered together in his name there they might expect him, in his spirit and influence, to be in the midst of them. The people may be very few; and yet the church may be, in its influence and power and significance, a great church. These people are banded together for the purpose of helping the cultivation, the development of the spiritual life of those who make up its membership, and then of helping others, as fast as it can widen the range of its influence, to cultivate and develop in themselves the spiritual life. Wherever you find one of these true churches, you find an effort after better education, a higher type of thought, you find a purer, sweeter social life, you find better sanitary arrangements, you find a higher type of industrial civilization, you find cleaner and more honest politics. In other words, you find that this church is the means of sweetening and cleansing and lifting humanity.

Now let us consider another point: has the church any duty to-day in preparing us, not merely for this life, but for any other life that might lie waiting for us beyond the shadow? There are a great many people in our liberal faith who seem to think that it does not make any special difference whether they have anything to do with the church or not, as related to their future well-being. One of the most intelligent of my parishioners here in Boston said a good many years ago,—I hope he is wiser now,—"Mr. Savage, in the passing away of the old theological ideas about eternal punishment in another life, has not the reason for church-going passed away?" A great many people, becoming emancipated from the horrors of the old theology, have come to the conclusion that there is nothing that the church can do to prepare them for a higher and grander destiny in another life. And yet, friends, if the church does stand for the cultivation in us of our spiritual faculties and powers, then it seems to me that it stands just as definitely related to the work of preparing us for happiness in another life. I take it that there are a great many people who, when they wake up in the other life, will find that they have come into a land with whose language they are scarcely familiar, into the midst of surroundings where they will not feel themselves at home; and this because they have not considered it of any importance to train themselves in this life in regard to their spiritual faculties. The powers which fitted them to enter into practical relations with the kind of life which they lived here may be of little use there. It requires only a very little thought to convince us that, before we can get into heaven, in this world or any other world, we must get heaven into ourselves; and we shall get into just so much heaven as we have first gotten into us. The church has a place and a power in the world still in preparing us for the spiritual life.

Is the church of any great value as compared with other human institutions and interests? I appeal to all intelligent laymen who hear me as to whether I be not right in the assertion that either the church is the grandest and noblest and most important organisation on the face of the earth, or else it is not worth bothering about one way or the other. If we can get all that the church stands for through science, through art, through music, through literature, and the other occupations and interests of the world, then we are wasting our money, our time and our enthusiasm, in organising associations of this sort. Laymen need to make up their minds that the church is the grandest institution in the world, or else abandon it at once and for all. If it is the grandest of institutions, then the relation of the layman to it would seem to be very clear. Compare it in your own minds with your business interests; compare it with literature or science. All these things are important, for they serve manhood and womanhood; but religion,

organised in a true church, is that which creates manhood and womanhood.

Now I wish to come to some practical suggestions as to the relation of the layman to the church. An impression seems to be abroad that we cannot have Unitarian churches anywhere until there is money and strength enough to build and decorate a beautiful church. This seems to me a lamentable mistake, and one that is standing in the way of what might be a magnificent progress of our thought and ideas all over the land. The first Christian churches were not housed at all except as they met from house to house in some little, convenient place that was owned or could be controlled by some one of their members. Those churches had no ritual, no liturgy, no form of service, no members, no choirs, no regular preaching, no ministers. They were simply little bands of men and women on fire with the divine life, who believed that they had heard the whisper of a gospel, and that it was their business to go out and proclaim the good news, to spread it by the contagion of thought and love far and wide through Palestine and all over the world. Paul did not wait, before he organised a new church, until a subscription list had been passed around, and they had money enough to build a beautiful church, or to organise and pay a choir that could sing better than any other in the neighbourhood. Wherever there were two or three or a dozen who believed in the new gospel, there was a church—a centre of the divine life. I know that this same thing can be done in this country, because it is being done, only we have not yet waked up to the idea that these are churches.

In the State of New York I happen to know a little place where there is a band of people who, without any missionary or any suggestion from the outside except that which comes from the printed page, have organised what is called a Unity League, because even they have not found out that they are a church. For three years now, without any minister, they have held a regular service of worship every Sunday in the year. They are a complete, compact body, a centre of influence for that whole town. I happen to know forty or fifty little churches like this scattered through different parts of the country. And, had it not been for the business cyclone of the past year, this little Unity League would have taken the first steps towards building a little house for itself, without any help from anybody in the world. We need to get rid of the pestiferous superstition that it needs a minister or a meeting-house to make a church. We Congregationalists ought to understand that the church is made up of the people, and that the minister is simply an officer of the church. If a deacon leaves town the church does not shut up its doors: it ought not to any more when the minister leaves town.

What should be the attitude of the layman toward the church, when you have a minister? There are thousands of Unitarians who think that they engage a minister to look after the religious life of the community for them, and that, when they have paid his salary with fair promptness, their obligation in the matter ceases. It is only begun then. Or, if you have a minister that you like, the temptation comes to look upon him as a lecturer hired by the year who is to entertain by his brilliant sermons and services; and you feel that you are conferring a favour on the minister if you are fairly regular at church, when, in fact, you are only doing a little of the duty that attaches to you as a son of God, as one of those to whom is committed the keeping of a magnificent gospel for the salvation of the world. How petty, how shallow, how mean is this whole conception of the relation of the layman to the church! How many people there are who, if they have a minister that they like, go to church on Sunday, if it does not rain, if they were not up very late the night before, if they are not very tired, if they have not a headache, if they do not happen to find the morning newspaper especially interesting! Turn the matter around a moment. Suppose that, when the hour for church service arrives, you should find there was no minister there. Of course, you would think he was sick, or something serious had happened. He ought to be able to feel sure that something serious had happened if you were not there.

Suppose you do not like your minister very well. Must the church suffer because, for the time being, your minister is not quite brilliant enough to attract you as a public lecturer would? Suppose his sermon is a little commonplace and poor. You ought to get a little comfort out of the reflection that, if you had preached it your-

self, it would have been a great deal worse. Do you ever stop to think, gentlemen of the pews, what it means for a minister to face the same audience every single Sunday, year after year, under the demand to have something fresh, something brilliant, something polished, for the entertainment of the pews? Is there any other man in any profession upon whom such a demand is made? If a member of Congress makes a speech once or twice a year that attracts the attention of everybody in the galleries, he has a national reputation as an orator. How is it with lawyers? I have said, a great many times, to my legal friends that I should feel as though my work ware half done if I had my case made for me by certain facts put into my hands, and then if I had an audience drafted by the State and hired to hear me, whether they liked it or not. John B. Gough lectured for more than forty years, and did not average one new lecture a year; for he had always a new audience. But you expect your minister, for five hundred or a thousand dollars a year, to lecture to you every Sunday, and be as brilliant as Gough every time. And then you expect him, without any opportunity for preparation, to be ready to address any audience, on any subject, on any occasion, and to do it so well that you can be proud of him. If he does not, you get tired of him in a little while, and want a new minister. And, then, besides that, there are a great many parishes where they expect a minister to spend most of his time in parish work.

The point I wish to emphasize is that the church is not the minister, that the church is not a lecture association, that the sermon is not a lecture, and that you do not go to church to be entertained. It is an organisation for the religious and moral cultivation of the place where it exists. And yet there are people who feel no sense of obligation to the church. I know of a church which was rent in twain by a quarrel as to whether the audience should turn and face the choir when they stood up for singing or whether they should face the minister. How petty, how contemptible, how forgetful of what the church means, and what it stands for! If you have no minister at all, continue your service. The church exists, not to be entertained by the minister, but for the sake of cultivating the spiritual life, lifting up the level of society, helping others to live the divine life. On whom does this responsibility rest? What is the difference between the minister and the person who sits in the pew? The minister, because he is supposed by natural gift or by training to have some special fitness for the work, he is set free from the ordinary business of life, that he may give his whole time to it. But, when the matter of responsibility is to be raised, gentlemen, there is not a man to-night in Boston, whether he is a religious man or not, whether he is a man of good moral character or not, whether he is in the finest house on Commonwealth Avenue or in the slums—there is no man who is not under as much obligation to be true to his God, to elevate the religious life of the world, as I am or as you are. Whether we acknowledge it or not, we are all children of God; and God reaches down his hand, whether we feel the touch or not, and places it on our brows in consecration, and bids us be true to him and to our fellow men. It is the business of the layman to attend the meetings of the church, to cast his influence on the right side, to lend the weight of his experience and his ability to the solution of its problems. It is his business to make a church the power of God for renovating and re-creating humanity.

If the church is worth having, it is worth all this. If it is not worth all this, it is not worth anything; and we can fill its place by other instrumentalities. If it is worth this, it demands from you as much as from its ministers,—your unremitting consecration, intelligent, earnest, day by day, Sunday by Sunday, year-long service, —throughout the year, and throughout life.

Huxley says that "the clergy are at present divisible into three sections, an immense body, who are ignorant and speak out; a small proportion, who know and are silent; and a minute minority, who know and speak according to their knowledge."

By thine own soul's law, learn to live;
And, if men thwart thee, take no heed,
And, if men hate thee, have no care,—
Sing thou thy song, and do thy deed;
Hope thou thy hope, and pray thy prayer,
And claim no crown they will not give.

John G. Whittier.

Respectable People.

It is really comforting to know that society has what are called respectable people to look up to, to boast of, and to honour with a frigidly respectable applause. Commonly your goodish and respectable people have a pedigree, which is more than some other folks have. Their ancestors were of a sort to be remembered, especially if they left some property behind them. And their early training, that, too, was of the properest kind. All their walk and conversation, if you will enquire, will be found to have been discreet. They have abstained from everything that could justly call forth comment on their course of life. They have made no serious mistakes in espousing any particular cause, whether humanitarian or religious. All their acquaintances have been selected according to strict commercial or social rules of propriety. As for risks, in any benevolent way, they have not known them.

Respectable people are negatively nearly perfect. They move on a dead level. Their ups and downs are few and gentle. Ever sagacious, they see how and where to follow in the old lines, believing ruts to be the channel-ways of righteousness. They are not miserable sinners at all. Their morality is as clear and cold as moonbeams on an icy sea under winter skies. Their hearts are ever in the right place, snugly wrapped up in a domestic seclusion. They are never betrayed into enthusiasms. They fall into no vulgar sympathies. The hot passions of hot-minded people never disturb their frigid calm. They have no indignation against wrong, provided wrong lets them alone. They do not see any reason for making a fuss over evils, if the evils do not reach them. What claims have a suffering world on their tranquil natures? They are respectable, and live to maintain their respectability. They are busy in keeping up the family name—and is not that a respectable employment? When they die they will have respectable funerals, and then will be consigned to a respectable oblivion. Oh, men and women, do something; take risks; fight the good fight of faith; but do not draw in, turtle-like, under the shell of respectability. When a man is so respectable that he cannot stoop to the lowly, or relieve the cry of hunger; or when a woman is so dainty that she must hold up her skirt as she passes the beggar in the street—in either case there is so much of respectability that it bids fair to keep its owner from passing through the narrow gate. Next to the surprise of missing some excellently respectable people from heaven will no doubt be the astonishment at seeing in high places those who were on earth poor and lowly, and who were scarcely considered to be respectable. The poor and humble—we have the Master's own words: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Love's Reasons.

Why do I love my darling so?
Good faith, my heart, I hardly know,
I have such store of reasons;
'Twould take me all a summer day—
Nay, saying half that I could say
Would fill the circling seasons.

Because her eyes are softly brown,
My dove, who quietly hath flown
To me as to her haven?
Because her hair is soft, and laid
Madonna-wise in simple braid,
And jetty as the raven?

Because her lips are sweet to touch,
Not chill, nor fiery overmuch,
But softly warm as roses.
Dear lips, that chasten while they move,
Lips that a man may dare to love,
Till earthly love-time closes?

Because her hand is soft and white,
Of touch so tender and so light,
That where her slender finger
Doth fall or move, the man to whom
The guards of Eden whispered, "Come!"
Beneath its spell might linger?

Because her heart is woman-soft,
So true, so tender, that I oft
Do marvel that a treasure
So rich, so rare, to me should fall,
Whose sole desert—so small, so small,
Is—loving past all measure?

Because she has such store of moods,
So archly smiles, so staidly broods,
So lovingly caresses;
So that my heart may never tire
Of monotone, or more desire
Than she, my love possesses?

Ah me! what know or what care I?
Or what hath love to do with "why"?
How simple is the reason!
I love her—for she is my love,
And shall while stars shall shine above,
And season follow season.

Historic Notes on Midland Churches.

No. IX. Part IV.

WHITCHURCH—THE PRESBYTERIAN CHAPEL.

The Rev. Joseph Marriott was minister from 1818 to 1823. During his time the congregation was active and flourishing. On 10th January, 1819, it established a Fellowship Fund, the object being to "promote Unitarianism by the distribution of tracts; by presenting occasional contributions to Unitarian chapels about to be erected, and to Unitarian academies, and by other means that may be thought proper by the subscribers to the fund." The president of the fund was the minister, and the treasurer, Mr. John Edwards, jun., currier, who is described as one who took a lively interest in this town in the diffusion of Unitarian Christianity. He died on 25th February, 1825, aged 34, leaving a wife and six children. "In doing good to his fellow-creatures," says his biographer, "he was indefatigable." On the occasion of his funeral sermon the "chapel was crowded to excess, there being on that evening an increase of numbers, from about 80 to nearly 600 persons, who all seemed deeply to feel the loss sustained."

In 1820, the congregation formed what must have been the first free lending library in the town. It was known as "a society for lending books." Certain members of the congregation were requested "to receive from the library belonging to their place of worship certain books for the purpose of lending them to such persons as they shall think proper." Every member who received books wrote down the titles of such books, and the names of the persons to whom he respectively lent them. At the expiration of two months, every member gave a copy of such list to the minister, who caused it to be entered in a book made for that purpose.

Marriott's first entry in the register is dated 7th April, 1822, his last on 11th September, 1823, shortly after which he removed to Liverpool.

John Philp first signs the register on 14th October, 1823. He came to Whitchurch directly after leaving Newington Green Academy, where he had spent three years, having entered it in the 21st year of his age. He went through his studies with honour to himself, and satisfaction to his tutor and friends, endearing himself to them by the unvarying sweetness of his disposition, his manly steadiness, virtue, and goodness of heart. Shortly after his settlement in Whitchurch, he took an active part in the formation of the Unitarian Association for Shropshire, Cheshire, and Staffordshire, being chosen its secretary and treasurer at the first meeting, which was held at Dodington Chapel, on Wednesday, 8th September, 1824. This association embraced the societies at Chester, Congleton, Delamere Forest, Hanley, Lane-End, Nantwich, Newcastle, and Whitchurch. Amongst the ministers and others present at this first meeting were the Rev. Wm. Hincks, of Renshaw Street Chapel, Liverpool, who preached at the morning and evening services; and the Revs. Thomas Cooper of Newcastle, and James Hawkes of Nantwich, who conducted the devotions. The afternoon meeting was preceded by a public dinner, 37 friends being present, under the chairmanship of Mr. Hincks. Mr. Philp, in his account of the day, says: "It being unusual in this town for persons of any religious denomination to have a public dinner, many unfavourable conjectures were raised by our adversaries in regard to the effects that would result from such a measure. But I am happy to state that there was so much decorum and prudence observed as almost to put it beyond the power of calumny itself to raise an evil report." Philip's last entry in the register is dated 22nd July, 1826. Shortly after this he removed to Ipswich, as minister of S. Nicholas Street Chapel, but he was not here many months before death claimed him, on 20th July, 1827, at his father's house in Falmouth. His "talents for the ministry were far superior to the common order."

His successor was the Rev. Richard Shawcross, born in Manchester, 1802. He came of a well-known Unitarian family of that city, and was brother of the late Alderman John Shawcross. He entered Manchester College, York, in 1817, as a divinity student, under Rev. Charles Wellbeloved, and remained there till 1823, when he was appointed minister at Lincoln. During his term at York he had, amongst many other fellow students who afterwards rose to distinction, Mark Philips, M.P. for Manchester, John Pemberton Heywood, Edward Strutt, afterwards Lord Belper, Dr. J. R. Beard, and Dr. James

Martineau, whose remembrances of his fellow-student are given in this letter, dated London, March 23rd, 1894.

"My dear Mr. Eyre Evans,—Though the image of Richard Shawcross's person is very distinctly photographed upon my memory, it does not supply me with the materials for any serviceable characterisation. I was in my first year at York College when he was in his last, at a time when there was but little association in either the class room or the hours of recreation between the senior and the junior students. He had, moreover, the somewhat solitary ways of a punctilious and dainty little man, careful of decorum himself, and not liking to incur the risk of liberties on the part of others. A rather pronounced courtesy, proceeding from real kindness of heart, secured him general goodwill; perhaps on terms too uniform to be compatible with strong attachments, of which I do not remember any examples. In character and conduct he was irreproachable, and throughout his academic years kept steadily in view the ministry to which he had dedicated himself. But he was not intellectually distinguished as a student. And the promise of his future seemed to lie rather in the gentleness of his sympathies and the faithfulness of his will, than in the enthusiasm of his conviction and the persuasiveness of his appeal. He seemed hardly equipped with force enough to encounter the sins of the rough world. I do not think I ever met him after his entrance on the duties of his ministry.—I remain, my dear sir, yours very truly, JAMES MARTINEAU."

GEORGE EYRE EVANS,
Whitchurch, in Salop.

(To be concluded next month.)

The Midland Christian Union.

On Monday, October 22nd, the autumnal meeting of the Midland Christian Union and Provincial Assembly took place at the Unitarian Chapel, Stafford Street, Walsall. At the business meeting in the afternoon the Rev. J. Wood presided, and amongst those present were the Rev. P. Dean (Walsall), A. A. Charlesworth (Birmingham), L. P. Jacks (Birmingham), H. McKean (Oldbury), H. Eachus (Coseley), A. H. Shelley (Dudley), L. H. Crooke (Oldbury), J. Harrison (West Bromwich), A. W. Timmis, E. D. P. Evans (Kidderminster), Kirkman Gray (Warwick), and a number of lay delegates.—On the proposition of the President, the Warwick church was received into union, and Mr. Gray, the minister of the church, was heartily welcomed. —The President reported that the mission at Small Heath had met with much success, although there were many difficulties in the way, and that a site for the chapel had been obtained in the Waverley Road. He also warmly welcomed the Rev. L. P. Jacks, the newly-appointed minister of the Church of the Messiah, Birmingham, whose coming, he believed, would result in a stronger life for the forward movement in the Birmingham district—(applause).—The Rev. L. P. Jacks afterwards read a paper on "The Abnormal Development of the Critical Faculty among Unitarians." His feeling, he said, was that criticism was too strong, and reverence too weak among Unitarians. Reverence was the very heart of religion, and he would like to have more of it. He did not know, however, how it could be cultivated unless it was by hailing men from the University of Heaven as well as from an earthly university. The "preter-natural solemnity of their services," to use one of the president's phrases, showed either that they loved religion little or dared not express their love. The habit of independence of thought had prevented them giving so much importance to the thoughts and teachings of others as they should do, and they had come to treat personalities in the same way. Then the method of reading the Bible helped this critical faculty, and either they should read the book more freely or not at all. He did not oppose critical reason, for that had done great things, but when it was shorn of reverence it was a Samson Agonistes—eyeless, and a slave among the enemy. Mr. Worthington, C.C., the Rev. P. Dean, the Rev. H. Eachus, the Rev. H. McKean, Mr. Derrington, the Rev. B. K. Gray, the Rev. A. W. Timmis, the Rev. L. H. Crooke, the Rev. J. Harrison, and the Rev. A. H. Shelley took part in a discussion which followed; and the President, in summing up, said it had convinced him that the coming of Mr. Jacks was the coming of an original mind into the neighbourhood.—In

the evening a public meeting took place in the chapel. Mr. J. R. Cooper (Town Clerk) presided; and after a few introductory remarks by the Rev. P. Dean, he said he could not resist the request which had been made to him to preside, because the association had been formed for the assistance of congregations which were not bound down by any particular creed. He was proud to come, because he was a Nonconformist, and Nonconformity meant liberty in thought and action. He felt, however, that he ought to apologise to them that they had been asked to come to such a benighted place as Walsall—(laughter)—according to the description of it which had been recently given by a clergyman of the Church of England. He had no hesitation in saying that that gentleman's statements with regard to Walsall, its people, and the character of its people, were gross exaggerations from beginning to end—(applause)—and he was thankful that Nonconformity was not driven to such stress as to send out men to obtain public subscriptions for any society by such means, if the place and the character of its people were to be aspersed in order that money might be obtained to teach the particular tenets of a particular church—(applause). As Nonconformists, they ought to be proud of their position. Their congregations might not be large, but it was not true to say that the Nonconformists were doing nothing for the people of Walsall—(applause.) Nonconformists had been in the forefront of all measures which had been for the benefit of the people of Walsall—(applause.) Walsall was one of the very first to adopt the provisions of the Free Library Act, and one of the first to avail itself of the power to provide public recreation grounds, with such generosity that not own was better provided than Walsall with such places of public resort—(applause).—The Rev. J. Wood, speaking in the place of the Rev. L. P. Jacks, who had had to leave, encouraged the young people to take their share in promoting a free and liberal Christianity.—The Rev. J. Harrison, who followed, urged that they should consider their points of agreement with the orthodox bodies rather than the points of difference.—The Rev. B. K. Gray and the Rev. A. A. Charlesworth also spoke.

Not as I will.

Blindfolded and alone I stand,
With unknown thresholds on each hand,
The darkness deepens as I grope,
Afraid to fear, afraid to hope;
Yet this one thing I learn to know
Each day more surely as I go,
That doors are opened, ways are made,
Burdens are lifted on or laid,
By some great law unseen and still,
Unfathomed purpose to fulfil,
"Not as I will."

Blindfolded and alone I wait,
Loss seems too bitter, gain too late;
Too heavy burdens in the load,
And too few helpers on the road;
And joy is weak, and grief is strong,
And years and days, so long, so long!
Yet this one thing I learn to know
Each day more surely as I go,
That I am glad the good and ill,
By changeless law are ordered still,
"Not as I will."

"Not as I will," the sound grows sweet
Each time my lips the words repeat.
'Not as I will!" The darkness feels
More safe than light when this thought steals
Like whispered voice so calm, and bliss,
All unrest and all loneliness.
"Not as I will," because the one
Who loved us first and best has gone
Before us on the road, and still
For us must all his love fulfil,
"Not as we will."

We can do more good by being good than in any other way!

"Better to have risen from an ape than to have degenerated from an Adam."

Says Dickens, "There is no playing fast and loose with the truth in any game, without growing the worse for it."

The number of men who scoff at and make light of the non-essentials in religion was never so large as now; but the number who scoff at and make light of the *essentials* in religion was never proportionally so small as now.

A String of Seed Pearls.

The pitiless anathema belongs to ecclesiasticism—the hard sneer to infidelity. True religion does not curse, and honest doubt does not scoff.

It is not isolated great deeds which do most to form a character, but small conterminous acts, touching and blending into one another. The greenness of a field comes not from trees but from blades of grass.

If the laws of God that pertain to health were obeyed but a single generation, the next generation would be physically beautiful. More than that, the next generation would start with an immense moral advantage. For good health is related to a virtuous character, to kindliness of temper, to soundness of judgment, to clearness of vision, to a cheerful disposition.

How little of the sea can a child carry away in his hand. How little does my heart take away of that great sea, the boundless love of God.

Of all the riches that we hug, of all the pleasures that we enjoy, we can carry no more out of this world than out of a dream.

We do not believe immortality because we have proved it, but we for ever try to prove it because we believe it.

The blessedness of life depends far more on its interests than its comforts.

Christianity is that in which no man can be too advanced to study the alphabet.

We have all been fairies once! And now, as we go wandering back over the fields of memory, we stoop and pick up the acorn cups, and marvel how we ever crept into them, as we assuredly did, most rare and spacious habitations.

We talk of angels from heaven sent down to minister to us, and perhaps we do not talk altogether unwisely; but there are times when the fellow-man who puts his hand in ours is more to us than any angel could be.

Thanksgiving is good—thanksliving is better.

It is easier to oil the bolts than to force them when they are rusty.

Not the great conquerer, nor the great statesman, nor the great thinker, but the great lover is the man as God meant him to be.

How sad it is that there are good persons who are yet not loveable! It will be soon enough to make their acquaintance in heaven!

The girls! may they add charity to beauty, subtract envy from friendship, multiply genial affection, divide time by industry and recreation, reduce scandal to its lowest denomination, and raise virtue to its highest power.

There are noble and mysterious triumphs which no eye sees, no renown rewards, and no flourish of trumpets salutes. Life, misfortune, isolation, abandonment, and poverty are battle-fields which have their heroes—obscure heroes, who are at times greater than illustrious heroes.

Every period of human life has its own lesson, and you cannot learn that lesson in the next period. The boy has one set of lessons to learn, and the young man another, and the grown-up man another. Let us consider one single instance. The boy has to learn docility, gentleness of temper, reverence, submission. All those feelings which are to he transferred afterwards in full cultivation to God—like plants nursed in a hotbed, and then planted out—are to be cultivated first in youth. Afterwards those habits, which have been merely habits of obedience to an earthly parent, are to become religious submission to a heavenly parent.

It was my custom, in my youth (says a celebrated Persian writer) to rise from my sleep to watch, pray, and read the Koran. One night, as I was thus engaged, my father, a man of practical virtue, awoke. "Behold," said I, "thy other children are lost in irreligious slumbers, while I alone wake to praise God." "Son of my soul," said he, "it were better for thee to be engaged in irreligious sleep than to awake to find fault with thy brethren."

THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

Word and Letter Puzzles.

ENIGMA.

I'm in the earth, I'm in the sea,
The air from me is never free;
The fire alone, the only one
Of all the elements I shun.
And yet in heat I may be found,
Though I the Arctic region bound;
In Europe's little continent
I do not dwell;—I am content
With the vast globe's three larger shares,
And there I settle my affairs.
I'm leader of a chosen band,
Who do their work in every land,
Under five captains;—chief am I
By reason of priority.
Yet, though I'm vague, indefinite,
Not certain of my meaning quite,
By me in every action led,
I'm in your heart, and in your head!
I point your aims, if not your ends,
I'm with your slaves, if not your friends,
I lead your armies, not your fleets,
Live in your lands, not in your streets.
I dwell in hate, but not in love,
Mix in your rage, your anger move.
If in your youth I ne'er engage,
You're sure to find me in your age!

[Find the letter which is in all these words].

LOGOGRIPHE.

I am a word of ten letters, denoting everything that arrives at its proper time. As it is now winter, I think you will find articles made of my 1, 3, 8, 9, 10 and 4, 2, 7, 9 very useful, for it is cold enough to nip your 6, 5, 1, 10 off. Old Winter has the 9, 10, 3, 1, 2 of the quarter just now, and is 8, 3, 1, 2 enough to take advantage of it, at his 10, 3, 1, 2, for which we do not 8, 9, 2, 1, 4 him. Every 8, 2, 10 has retired till cold old Winter has 9, 2, 1, 4 and sway. The gardeners are all frozen out, and have not even an 8, 10, 3, 6 for 1, 3, 9, 2. The fishers, however, do better; they still catch 10, 2, 9, 1 and 1, 5, 9, 2, 4, though the 4, 10, 3 is disturbed, and 8, 3, 1, 10 are not in yet. You can 4, 2, 10 old Time yonder, with his 8, 3, 9, 2 of finny prey on his 3, 1, 4, going to market, while his 4, 5, 6, who is as 9, 2, 3, 6 as himself, stays at home with the little 9, 2, 3, 4, 1.

[A Logogriphe is a word out of the letters of which a number of other words are made. In this case 21 words are made out of the first word of ten letters. You are to find them out].

DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

Ruler of all things, for a space his hand
Is traced in sparkling lines throughout the land:
Painting each pane and jewelling each tree,
Checking the brooks and rills that trickled free;
Tasting the roots of fruits all stored away,
Withering the garden blooms that were so gay.
Such is my First,—the boys alone delight
To see his silent traces every night,
And greet him well, for long they all have reckoned
Upon his hand to help them to my Second.

I.

Where the fairies come, we grow,
Their most secret haunts we know.
Our fringed fans are tall and green,
Pavilions for the elfin queen.
Those that with all careful heed,
Sow at night our mystic seed,
May her sportive revels see
Underneath the greenwood tree.

II.

When a frisky fancy takes
The jovial Land of Cakes,
She calls for her piper to play her a tune,
Till the very roof-tree shakes!
And then ere it grows too late,
A perplexing figure of eight
Is danced by the lads and lasses all
At a most astonishing rate!

III.

When Pierre meets Marie in the lane,
And slyly steals a kiss,
He asks a question clear and plain,
To which she answers—this!

IV.

No traveller of modern times
Such wondrous tales narrated;—
As of this ancient mariner
Have been most gravely stated.

V.

When the storm king rises
From his cloudy lair,
And his mu tered anger
Grumbles in the air;
Doors and windows rattle,
Sign-posts creak and groan,
And from roof and rafter
This is roughly blown.

Answers to be sent to the Editor, 120, Gough Road, Birmingham, before November 20th.

News from the Field.

BIRMINGHAM.—*Church of the Messiah.*—A public welcome was given on Wednesday evening, October 24th, to Rev. L. P. Jacks and Mrs. Jacks, formerly of Renshaw Street Chapel, Liverpool. The new pastor arrived in Birmingham three weeks ago, and with his wife was very heartily welcomed by the officers of the church; but this meeting was arranged in order that they might be formally introduced, not only to the members of the congregation, but to all the workers associated with the various auxiliary institutions in affiliation with the church. There was a large attendance, about four hundred ladies and gentlemen being present. A tea and an organ recital preceded the meeting, which took place in the church, under the presidency of Mr. T. H. Russell, chairman of the Vestry Committee.—The Chairman offered Mr. and Mrs. Jacks a warm welcome, assuring them that the members of the church had formed the best anticipations with regard to their permanent settlement in Birmingham. They felt sure that the noblest traditions of the ministry there would be safe in Mr. Jacks' keeping. They could only be very thankful that the spirit which animated Dr. Crosskey was the same spirit that Mr. Jacks brought to the mission upon which he had now entered.—Mr. Arthur Kenrick, as one of the oldest members of the congregation, added his greeting, and the Rev. Joseph Wood spoke on behalf of the ministers of the district. He said that the churches of the Midlands, having been accustomed for so long to look to the Church of the Messiah for light and leading, viewed with especial interest and gratification that the choice of the congregation had fallen on Mr. Jacks. The minister of the Church of the Messiah, from his very position, must be a minister in all the churches of the Midlands, and he wanted that congregation to feel that they had not simply chosen a man to minister to their own spiritual culture, but a man from whom the churches of the district had a right to expect counsel, help and service. That church, with all its memories and traditions, could not live to itself. No doubt they come there first of all as learners, disciples, fellow-worshippers, students together of the truth of God. But with this inward look there had always been an outward impulse. It was honourable to the Church of the Messiah that it had always resisted the self-enclosing tendency of many congregations. There were signs among their congregations of a tendency to turn the church into a club, existing for high ends, but seeking its own benefit alone. It is a tendency which makes the pew as exclusive and private a piece of property as the parlour. It contemplates with complacency its own growth in grace and wisdom but has no missionary spirit. It is a tendency which requires constant watchfulness. A church is not a club; it is not the preserve of a few subscribers; it does not exist for its pew-holders. It exists for the community; it bears witness for the soundness of humanity whether in rags or purple; its doors are open with a wide welcome to all; if it has the church idea at all it must have a certain apostolic consciousness of mission and ministry to the world at large. That conception of a church had never been absent from their history, and he trusted that under Mr. Jacks it would abound yet more and more. He trusted Mr. Jacks would be supported by the unfailing sympathy of a devoted congregation, that he might speak to them in tones thrilling with accent of heaven, that he might inspire them with those trusts and affections which had adorned the saintly souls and martyr spirits who had made that church a beacon-light for 200 years.—Speeches were also delivered by the Rev. Rudolph Davis, an old personal friend of Mr. Jacks; Mr. W. J. B. Tranter, home missionary; the Rev. T. Pipe, Fazeley Street Mission; and Mr. Kimberley, who welcomed the new minister on behalf of the Sunday schools.—On rising to reply, the Rev. L. P. Jacks was received with great cordiality, the whole of the congregation rising to greet him. He said that in their welcome he read the revelation of the splendid opportunities for work associated with that church. He confessed to them that for mere denominational success he cared very little indeed, but he cared infinitely for that success which consisted in opposing the evil influences which belonged to our modern life, and in replacing those evil influences with other influences which should make for a large, a noble, and a God-fearing manhood. They might depend upon it that the effort was needed, and if they made the effort, in spite of the difficulties they might have to encounter from the particular theological position some of them chanced to occupy, it would be richly-crowned with success. There were two foundations upon which a strong church rested: the one was some approximation to a common belief and a common worship, and the other was the doing of work in common for the good work of humanity. He ventured to say it was this second business which was, after all, the more essential to the life and well-being of a church. At the close of the meeting there was a conversazione in the upper schoolroom.

EVESHAM.—The first of a series of week-night lectures on theological subjects was given on Thursday, October 18th, by the Rev. L. P. Jacks, M.A. There was a good attendance, several strangers being present, who expressed themselves much interested in the lecture. The next lecture will be given by the Rev. Joseph Wood, on November 22nd.

KIDDERMINSTER.—A correspondent sends us a copy of the New Meeting House "Record" for October, containing interesting accounts of the activities carried on by the Church under the able, earnest, and sympathetic leadership of Mr. Evans. The Harvest Festival was held on Sunday, September 30th, and was most successful. The evening service was attended by 600 people. The chapel was beautifully decorated, under the direction of Miss Stooke. The Guild, the Gymnasium, and the Girls' Club appear to be in a flourishing condition, and the Sunday School more than holds its own. We congratulate our friend, Mr. Evans, on the healthy condition of the Church under his charge. Kidderminster is a striking instance of what may be done by hard work and enthusiasm.

KINGSWOOD CHAPEL, HOLLYWOOD.—The Harvest Thanksgiving was celebrated here on the 7th. There were large congregations, the building being filled to its utmost capacity in the evening. The sermons were preached by the Rev. J. Hardinge Matthews, and collections taken for the Kingswood Benevolent Fund. The choir sang the anthems, "O praise the Lord," and "Ye shall dwell in the land." After the services many remained for a considerable time to admire the beautiful decorations and the plants, fruits, vegetables, corn, and loaves contributed by many kind friends. A pleasant feature was the large number of gifts from Sunday scholars. Fruit, vegetables, and bread were afterwards distributed to the aged and needy in the neighbourhood. —The week-night classes for languages, shorthand, etc., have now recommenced in the schools.

LYE.—SCHOOL EXTENSION FUND, &c.—Amount acknowledged as promised or received in last month's *Seed Sower*: £142 7s. Later subscriptions: Miss Emily Sharpe, London, £10; Mr. C. H. Hardeman, Newcastle, Staffs., £5; Mrs. L. M. Aspland, London, £3 3s.; Mr. J. Buckton, Leeds, £2; Mrs. Heywood, Bolton, £2; Mr. J. E. Taylor, London, £2; Mrs. Evans, London, £1 1s.; Mr. John Wand, Birmingham, £1 1s.; Mr. H. W. Gair, Liverpool, £1; Mrs. F. Ryland, Birmingham, 10s.; Mr. C. J. Watson, Birmingham, 5s.; Mr. Eli Wooldridge, Lye, 5s.; total subscribed, £170 12.

STOURBRIDGE.—In the beginning of the past summer a Ramble Society was formed by the young people of the Stourbridge congregation, and its meetings have been very enjoyable. A want of something to keep up social interest during the summer was felt, and an experimental ramble to Churchill was undertaken. On June 20th a party of over twenty, including the Rev. A. W. and Mrs. Timmins, met on Hanbury Hill and walked to Churchill by a delightfully varied route. Tea was provided in Churchill Schools, everything being very well managed; and a pleasant walk home facing the western sky, bright with sunset tints, concluded what we all agreed had been a very successful experiment. A meeting of all interested in the movement was held in Woolaston Road Schools on the following Thursday night, when a Ramble Club was formed, and a programme for the remaining summer months sketched out. Very enjoyable walks to Clent, the Fairy Dell, Kinver, Hagley Monument (a blackberrying excursion), and Green's Forge have been taken, and the tea has generally been managed successfully. At Green's Forge we were lucky enough to find very comfortable quarters at a large farm—as a rule we have been obliged to pack ourselves into a cottage, and there has been an overflow meeting in the garden.

WEST BROMWICH.—On Sunday, Sept. 30, the Harvest Services were held at the Lodge Road Chapel. In the morning the pastor, the Rev. J. Harrison, occupied the pulpit. His sermon had reference to some points of agreement between the members of Liberal churches and Christians of other denominations. He dealt with the various aspects of common worship, and the practical aims of the churches. Speaking of the differences, he advocated the greatest possible freedom in the expression of them, and declared that he had no desire to minimise either their extent or their importance.—In the evening the Rev. A. A. Charlesworth (Birmingham) occupied the pulpit. In the course of a very admirable sermon he spoke of the bountiful produce of the earth, which he declared to be capable of yielding sufficient food for an infinitely larger population for thousands of years to come. This England of ours was capable, he said, of yielding more than enough for all its population. If it did not do so, the fault lay not with God but man. God did not make our commercial system; we made it ourselves. Touching upon the various religious denominations, he warned Unitarians against assuming that they possessed all the truth, or stood on a higher intellectual level than the members of orthodox churches. There was, he remarked, something to receive and to learn from them all. In the morning the choir sang the anthem, "I was glad," and in the evening, "Bless the Lord," both of which are the composition of the organist, Mr. J. R. Cooke. The latter, which had been written specially for the occasion, is a very excellent production, and was well rendered by the choir. Collections in aid of the Chapel Funds were made at the close of each service. —Harvest Festivals have also been held at Hurst Street, Birmingham, the Old Meeting Church, Tamworth, Small Heath, and many other places.

WHITCHURCH.—The first of the monthly series of week-night services during the winter was held in the Church of the Saviour on Wednesday, October 3rd, the preacher being the Rev. Charles Hargrove, M.A. The subject was that of the doctrine of the Trinity, marked attention being paid to Mr. Hargrove's clear exposition. This course of services is the outcome of Mr. Hargrove's suggestion, made at the Friday's session of the late Triennnial Conference, respecting week-night services in remote towns, and the truth of his words, so far as this congregation is concerned, that "those whose heart is in their cause will come whenever the church doors are thrown open," was seen in the good a lult congregation which was present. The five other preachers are the Revs. W. E. Addis, M.A., Brooke Herford, D.D., John Page Hopps, James C. Street, and Joseph Wood. At the close of the service Mr. Hargrove spent the rest of the evening in the Highgate Club, where his presence was fully appreciated by the men. The evening's expenses were met by the collection

Midland Church Calendar for November.

ALCESTER: The Old Meeting House.
Minister: Rev. John Dale, Salford House. Service at 6 p.m.

ATHERSTONE: Unitarian Chapel.
Minister: Rev. J. Howard, of Tamworth. Service at 3 p.m.

BIRMINGHAM: Church of the Messiah, Broad Street.
Minister: Rev. L. P. Jacks, M.A.
Services: 11 and 6-30.

BIRMINGHAM: The Hurst Street Mission.
Minister: Rev. W. J. Clarke, 160, Pershore Road.
Services: 10-15, 2-45, and 6-30.

BIRMINGHAM: The Fazeley Street Mission.
Minister: Rev. T. Pipe, 59, Great Brook Street.
Services: 11 and 6-30.

BIRMINGHAM: The Newhall Hill Church.
Minister: Rev. A. A. Charlesworth, Reservoir Road, Edgbaston. Services: 11 and 6-30.

BIRMINGHAM: The Old Meeting Church.
Minister: Rev. Joseph Wood, 120, Gough Road, Edgbaston. Services: 11 and 6-30.

BIRMINGHAM: The Church of the Saviour.
Minister: Rev. J. C. Street, Bristol Road, Edgbaston. Services: 1 and 6-30.

BIRMINGHAM: Small Heath, Little Green Lane Board School.
Minister: Rev. Edward J. Sale, 70, Whitmore Road, Small Heath. Service at 6-30 p.m.

BANBURY: Christchurch Chapel, Horse Fair.
Minister: Rev. H. Hill, 5, Crouch Street. Service: Evening, 6-30.

COSELEY: The Old Meeting House.
Minister: Rev. Henry Eachus. Services: 11 and 6-30.

CRADLEY: Netherend Chapel.
Minister: Rev. E. P. Hall. Services 11 and 6-30.

DUDLEY: The Old Meeting House.
Minister: Rev. A. H. Shelley. Services: 11 and 6-30.

EVESHAM: Oat Street Meeting House.
Minister: Rev. Rudolf Davis. Services: 11 and 6-30.

KIDDERMINSTER:
Minister: Rev. E. D. Priestley Evans. Services: 10-30 and 6-30.

KINGSWOOD: Kingswood Chapel, Hollywood.
Minister: Rev. J. Hardinge Matthews. Services: 11 and 6-30.

LOUGHBOROUGH: Unitarian Chapel.
Minister: Rev. H. Haycock, Beacon Road. Services: 10-45 and 6-30.

OLDBURY: Unitarian Meeting House.
Minister: Rev. Henry McKean, The Dingle, Oldbury. Services: 11 and 6-30.

SHREWSBURY: High Street Church.
Minister: Rev. E. Myers, F.G.S., Claremont Hill. Services: 11 and 6-30.

STOURBRIDGE: Presbyterian Chapel.
Minister: Rev. A. W. Timmis. Services: 11 and 6-30.

TAMWORTH: Cole Hill Chapel.
Minister: Rev. J. Howard, 17, Aldergate. Services: 11 and 6-30.

THE LYE: Unitarian Chapel.
Minister: Rev. I. Wrigley, B.A. Service: 6-30.

WALSALL. Unitarian Free Church.
Minister: Rev. Peter Dean, 3, Sandwell Street. Services: 11-15 and 6-30.

WEST BROMWICH: Lodge Road Chapel.
Minister: Rev. John Harrison Jesson Street. Services: 11 and 6-30.

WHITCHURCH: Church of the Saviour.
Minister: Rev. George Eyre Evans, Doddington Parsonage. Services: 11, 2-15 for Children, 6-30.

WOLVERHAMPTON: Unity Church, Snow Hill.
Minister: Rev. L. G. Harris Crook, Oaklands Road. Services: 11 and 6-30.